

## “Parenthetically Speaking” –SDSU- June, 1986

**“From a Faculty Father”** by Dr. Barry W. Jones, Ph.D., Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, College of Human Services and Associate Professor, Department of Communicative Disorders

As a parent of a student attending San Diego State University (SDSU), a faculty member and member of SDSU’s administrative team, what perspectives on education can I provide to you as fellow parents of SDSU students? In this brief article I hope to express some of my expectations for my daughter while she is a student at SDSU. More specifically, I wish to discuss what I hope she will accept as her personal and academic responsibilities while on this campus.

In terms of personal responsibility, I want my daughter to understand that she is part of a large community of diverse individuals. This community differs from most cities and towns, however, in that it offers, on a daily basis, numerous opportunities within a relatively small geographic area. It is my hope that she will plan her work so she can participate in some of these activities to better know herself and the world in which she lives. **At no other time in her life will she be able to live in an environment that is as supportive of diversity as in a university. I want her therefore, to take advantage of the opportunities to know, understand, challenge and be challenged by the wealth of diversity that surrounds her.**

I also want my daughter to know that this community provides numerous services to protect her safety and her physical and mental health. Further, she should know that these services have been paid for by her student fees and require, in most cases, no further payment. She must, however, accept responsibility for herself – no one can force her to avoid potentially dangerous situations, to call the escort service or to go to health services or to the counseling center.

From an academic perspective, my daughter should realize that she is now much more responsible for her own education than she was in high school. Although I believe it is the responsibility of the university’s faculty and staff to clearly state the requirements for graduation and to provide accurate advising, it is her responsibility to make herself known to the adviser in her department and to see that adviser at least once a semester (prior to registering for classes) to ascertain that she is appropriately meeting the university and departmental requirements for her major. She should also realize that the deadlines established for administrative changes (adding and dropping classes, applications for graduation, changes in grading status, etc.) were not created for the purpose of harassing students but to maintain the academic integrity of the institution and to accommodate an ever-changing pool of approximately 33,000 students. It is essential, therefore, that she be aware of these deadlines and be responsible for meeting them if administrative changes are needed.

Most importantly, my daughter must understand that if she is having difficulty in one of her classes it is her responsibility to identify the source of the problem and correct it. If that involves a meeting with the professor to discuss course content and expectations, she must find the time. If it means improving her writing or math skills, she must seek the needed assistance. The faculty and staff of SDSU are generally available for consultation and resources are available to assist students for virtually every problem they may encounter. They must, however, accept the responsibility for making their needs known.

I want my daughter to realize that a university education is not just to prepare her for employment or to confirm her current ideas and values. An education at SDSU should provide her with a broad introduction to the arts, humanities and sciences, appropriate communication and quantitative skills, critical thinking skills and the theoretical and practical bases for her chosen profession. This body of knowledge and skills will assist her in making the important personal and professional decisions she will make throughout her life.

**I also want my daughter to realize that she must strike a balance in her life at SDSU. She cannot spend all of her time studying nor should she spend all of her time in recreational activities. It is necessary, however, for her to allow some time to “re-create” her energies for the demanding tasks of a university education.**

In conclusion, life at an urban institution of higher education is marked by dramatic changes in knowledge, beliefs and levels of personal responsibility. These changes are not always easy to accommodate by the students or by their parents. It is important for you as parents to remember however, that people are available at SDSU to assist your sons and daughters through this period of growth.